The TCR Perspective of Gender: Moving from Critical Theory to an Activism-Praxis Orientation

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TCR Context and the Introduction of Gender Justice

In David Mick's 2005 ACR Presidential address, transformative consumer research (TCR) was framed as a means to enhance consumer welfare and to solve the world's "real problems" (Mick 2006, p. 2). As Mick argued, although this objective was "not something new, nor has it been dormant," there was a need for greater collaborative efforts. Over the past decade, through bi-annual dialogical conferences, special journal issues, and a growing network of scholars, TCR has become formalized as a movement that "seeks to encourage, support, and publicize research that benefits consumer welfare and quality of life for all beings affected by consumption across the world" (Transformative Consumer Research, 2017). The vision for TCR is to be an academic movement with a praxis-orientation in which "a larger community of committed citizens...seek to learn from one another and advance a combined set of objectives that improve quality of life for all people" (Davis, Ozanne and Hill, 2016, p. 168).

Several areas of scholarship have flourished as a result of a TCR approach, including: risky consumption (Mason et al., 2011), addictive behaviors (Grover et al., 2011), healthier choices (e.g. food) (Block et al., 2011), poverty (Scott et al., 2011; Blocker et

al., 2013; Hamilton et al., 2014), the interaction of marketplace forces and consumer ethnicities (Visconti et al., 2014), consumer vulnerability (Baker et al., 2005; Hill, 1995), among other themes. Service scholars have been particularly active in advancing a TCR agenda in relation to health care, financial and social services. Since Anderson (2010) conceptualized the term *transformative services research*, interest has remained enthusiastic, with many promising areas for future research (Rosenbaum et al., 2011; Anderson et al., 2013). Moreover, special issues dedicated to research adopting TCR perspectives can be seen in our field's top journals, including *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Service Research, Journal of Research for Consumer, Journal of Consumer Psychology,* and *Journal of Business Research.*

Although the first gender track started only in 2015 at TCR's fifth conference, we argue that TCR's orientation provides an encouraging space for gender-related studies. TCR's adoption of "transdisciplinary" and "cross-cultural" teams (Crockett et al., 2013) fits with the need for gender issues to be considered from multiple lenses and dovetails with gender scholarship's history of operating across many disciplines. TCR's use of interactive conferences in which relevant stakeholders and interested scholars meet in groups to share and discuss issues and potential solutions at hand, and its focus on informing policy and interventions (Davis, Ozanne and Hill, 2016), aligns with feminist attitudes that view scholarship as a political space that should be leveraged for action (Maclaran, 2015). In calling for a TCR orientation, we acknowledge that, despite more than a century of writing and research from feminists, "gender" and the "system" that

holds gender demarcations and injustices in place (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004) remain areas in need of global transformational change. Influenced by power imbalances, cultural norms, discourse and political action of individuals and groups, gender represents one of the most fundamental forces that shape the way people identify and interact with each other. Scholarship stemming from the first gender track at TCR has highlighted these interactive effects, proposing a Transformative Gender Justice Framework (TGJF) to help practitioners and scholars to address gender-based injustices (Hein et al., 2016). Subsequent publications have situated the TGJF in the wider field of consumer behavior literature, identifying the power dynamics that underlie gender injustices (Steinfield et al., forthcoming), and offering directives to guide future research towards addressing gender injustices (Hein et al., 2016, Steinfield et al., 2016, Zayer et al., 2017). The TGJF, described in detail later, makes apparent the complexities that underlie gender injustices. Imperatively, it pushes scholars to move beyond deconstructive critiques that 'tear down' the dominant paradigm or mere descriptions that mute potential solutions out of fear of replacing one dominant paradigm or biased agenda with another. Rather it seeks constructive critiques that can help shed light on the intended and unintended consequences of potential resolutions, providing policy makers and practitioners with a more comprehensive consideration of the interlinking and recursive interactions between behavioral, political and market forces.

In this chapter, we start by substantiating our claim that gender-related research is appropriately suited to a TCR perspective: research on gender, we note, has been and should continue to be transformative. After laying the rationale for a transformative

perspective, we provide details as to how we have taken this forward through an overview of the TGJF and a description of the current TCR-gender studies landscape. We highlight topics in marketing and consumer behavior studies both within TCR that might benefit from the addition of a gender focus, and research on gender outside of TCR that might gain from the integration of a transformational perspective. We conclude by reflecting on the activism and praxis orientations that this integration could help stimulate both outside and within academia.

The TCR-Gender Studies Relation: 'Gender' as an Inherently Transformative Construct

Time and time again, gender has been found as a root cause of global, macro-level and local, micro-level oppressions and injustices. These range from the continuum of violence against women (Cockburn, 2004; Bunch, 1990) and transgender people (Lombardi et al., 2002; Stotzer, 2009), to the consequences of gender norms (Steinfield et al., forthcoming), the reproduction of gender stereotypes (Schroeder and Borgerson, 1998; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013), and the subtle and obvious forms of discrimination, such as microaggressions (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Nadal et al., 2016), fragilities in masculinities (Hearn, 1987; Pascoe, 2011), the persistent gender pay gaps and financial-based inequities (Lips, 2013; Steinfield and Scott, forthcoming), and the increased vulnerability to poverty of women (Gentry and Steinfield, 2017) and genderqueer individuals (Albelda et al., 2017). These injustices are so ingrained that, globally, no country can be identified where both women and men are materially and socially equal (United Nations, 2015). Moreover, although researchers have made

progress in identifying the importance of gender, the lack of data on non-binary identifying individuals (for instance in surveys or government census) is telling of the invisible injustices we have yet to fully consider (Sanger, 2010). Given the complex range of visible and invisible gender inequalities, often linked to consumption, markets and marketing, we argue that a TCR-influenced activist stance is paramount toward addressing those inequalities to achieve gender justice.

When we refer to gender, we speak about the sociocultural notions of femininities and masculinities, and how they become linked to sex (as a biological condition), and thus contribute to perceived differences, historically between men and women (Connell, 1987), and the perception of 'divergent' behavior for those falling outside of the heteronormative, cisnormative gender/sex binaries, such as those who are genderqueer[1] (Dozier, 2005; Richards et al., 2016; Westbrook and Schilt, 2013). Indeed, 'gender' as a social construct was defined in feminist literature to challenge perspectives that considered sex differences and sex roles as biologically determined and to reveal how injustices become seemingly 'natural' (Oakley, 2015/1972). A critical study of gender thus denotes that differences are largely based on socio-cultural constructions and therefore can be changed. It is these critical feminist perspectives that we believe provide fertile grounds for transformative research of gender. They do so, for example, based on the deconstruction of dualisms that attach gender attributes (masculine/feminine) to sex

[1] We use genderqueer an umbrella term to capture the range of identities that fall outside of the heteronormative (i.e. sexual orientation) and cisnormative two-gender binary (i.e. whether one identifies with the sex assigned at birth), including, but not limited to: queers, gays, lesbians, asexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, agender or transgender people and those who have an intersex condition. Refer to TSER (2018) for a helpful guide.

(male/female) (McCall, 1992). They propose alternative theorizations constructive to a broader understanding of what underpins notions of gender, such as queer theory, standpoint theory, and material-discursive feminism. Queer theory, for instance, critiques the categorizations of normative versus deviant behavior, making obvious who perpetuates and gains from such a categorization (Sedgwick, 1990). It reveals the mismatch that exists between reality and the socially constructed ideals in which gender, sex and desire are to be aligned, calling for a better reflection of consumers' actual (versus prescribed) lives (Jagose, 1996) and the potential for diverse and complex gender fluidities (Monro, 2008; also see the special issue in *Differences* (1991)). Standpoint theory, which highlights how points of view (standpoints) are shaped by personal experience, challenges acceptance of the status quo by arguing that the perspectives of oppressed and marginalized groups need to be considered to offer a more objective view of the world (Harding, 1987). Material-discursive feminism makes us conscious of the way matter (the materialization of phenomenon) and discourse (the way what can be said, written, thought, measured, etc. is enabled or constrained) mutually inform one another to create our reality. That is, matter and discourse, together, give rise to divisions between things, such as what we consider to be 'human' versus 'non-human' or 'cyborgian', 'men' versus 'women' versus 'other' (Barad, 2003; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Haraway, 1997; Hearn, 2013). Although these more 'radical' perspectives have found less resonance in marketing and consumer research (Hearn and Hein, 2015), they may be particularly relevant to transformative research because they reveal the multiple ways inequities are held in place through discourse, embodied in physical realities, and thus the need for policy makers and practitioners to address structures, practices, beliefs, relations,

and physical realities.

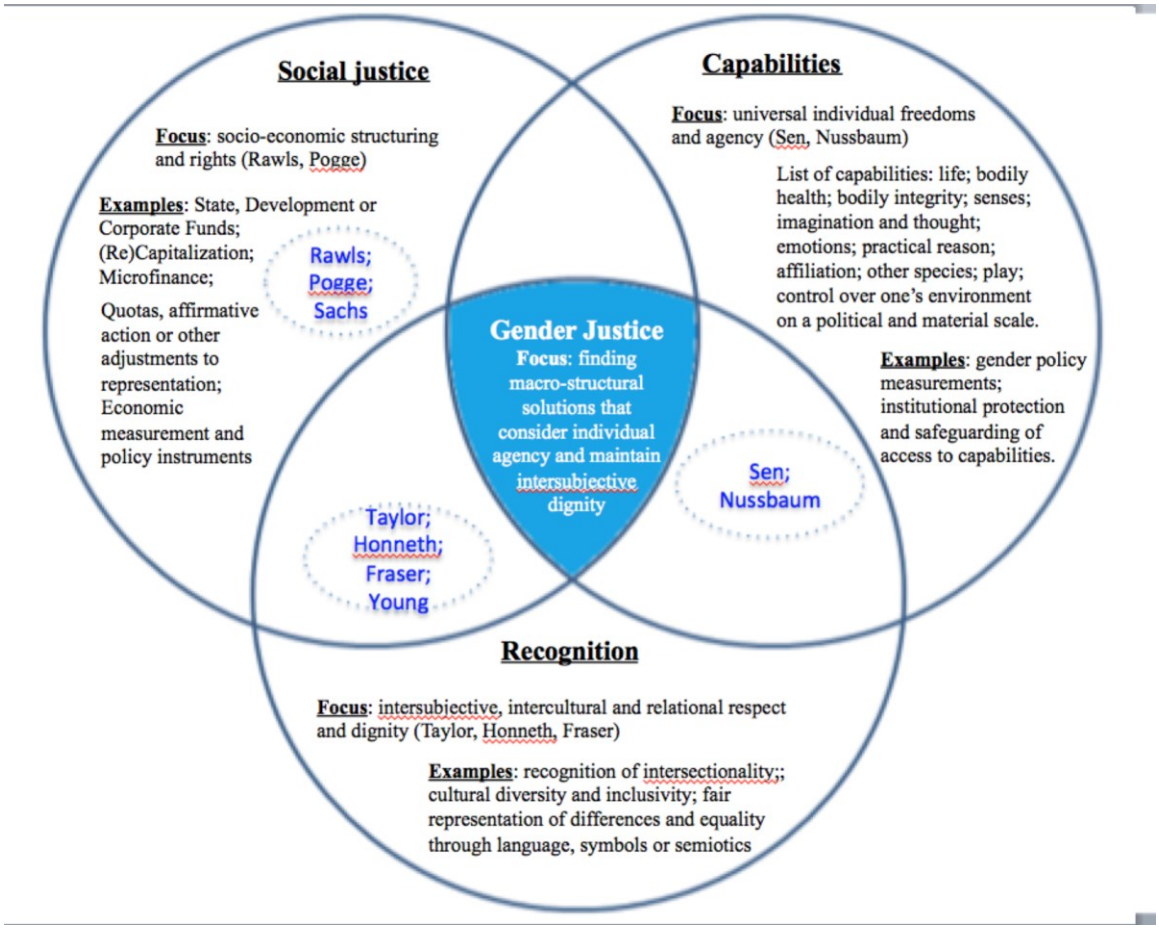
Within the marketing literature, although feminist perspectives have been encouraged (Bristor and Fischer, 1993), and scholars have drawn upon a range of critical theories to consider the controversial role of markets and marketplaces in perpetuating and/or changing structure, practices, beliefs and relations (Bettany, Dobscha, O'Malley and Prothero, 2010; Catterall, Maclaran and Stevens, 2000), we argue that a greater push to change discriminatory practices is needed. It is with this perspective that a TCR-gender studies relationship bases its call for action—encouraging research, critiques *and* activism that seeks to change gender injustices linked to marketing, markets and consumer research.

Defining "Gender" within TCR: The Transformative Gender Justice Framework

In recognition of the prior work of marketing and gender scholars, the first gender track at the TCR conference sought to map out what a TCR approach could illuminate about gender. Transforming gender, we proposed, meant resolving injustices (Hein et al., 2016), yet how was one to view injustices? Injustices have been studied through a variety of lenses. Moreover, different theoretical angles result in various remedies. The TGJF was built on the assumption that these angles could be combined, and by combining them we would be able to cast a more encompassing view on what 'justice' should entail. As such, we pulled from three prominent theories of enfranchisement that address different aspects that contribute to (in)justices: social justice theory, which focuses on structural and regulatory dynamics; the capabilities approach, which brings to the fore the agency

of individuals; and recognition theory, which emphasizes discursive and sociocultural dynamics (refer to Figure 1). To briefly elaborate, social justice theory identifies inequalities within socio-economic structures and pushes for laws and policies aimed at securing rights or redistributing resources to correct imbalances (Rawls, 1972; Scott et al., 2011). The capabilities approach, on the other hand, places the root of systemic injustices in limitations placed on a person's internal capabilities and ability to make choices and realize individual functionings (things individuals may value doing or being) (Sen, 2001; Nussbaum, 1999). It encourages policy makers and states to create conditions in which an individual's needs (for example, physiological, bodily health and safety) are met, and agentic essences (such as voice or decision making) can flourish. The last perspective—recognition theory—places the origins of injustice within identity politics and Hegelian subject-object dialectics, that is, the way we see or do not see each other. As such, it focuses on securing justice by ensuring cultural or symbolic representations and language are critiqued, challenged, and changed (Fraser, 1998; Honneth, 1996; Taylor, 1992).

Figure 1: The Transformative Gender Justice Framework (TGJF)



Source: Adapted from Steinfield et al. 2016

Often scholars promote one of these lenses over the other, yet doing so means that proposed remedies can suffer from weaknesses inherent in each theory. Social justice theory, for instance, while striving for universality of rights, can lead to over-generalized, hollow laws that fail to account for: differences and intersectional oppressions, for instance, equality for women does not translate equally to minority women or butch lesbians; impediments that prevent people from exercising agency and embracing their rights, including resistance or backlash from those in positions of privilege and power (Steinfield et al., forthcoming); and the wider, interacting structures of constraint and socio-cultural elements, such as naturalized gender roles and the undervaluation of

reproductive/care work (Folbre, 1994; Taylor, 1992). Capabilities approach, which can account for personal differences and experiences of intersectional oppressions, can, on the other hand, become too focused on the individual and how a person defines 'freedom'. Thus, it can overlook institutions—family, community, states—and ideological power that shape what people believe they can and cannot do. In a similar vein to social justice laws, interventions and policies that aim to enhance people's capabilities can reproduce entrenched norms and beliefs and fail to bring about deeper systemic transformations in society. Lastly, recognition theory, which can raise awareness of naturalized norms, beliefs, and (in)visible modes of misrecognition, can become caught up in systemic-level analysis that discounts other contributing power relations. Consequentially, 'recognition theory' resolutions can be utopian, naively assuming that actors will be open, able, and ready to change (McNay, 2008). Yet as Steinfield et al. (2016) note, if we are to achieve substantive transformations in the socio-cultural sphere, policies must also address "those who are in position to decide *what* or *who* becomes recognized, and [find] solutions that they are willing to embrace" (p. 4, emphasis original).

Thus, to leverage the strengths of each theory and to overcome the weaknesses of each, the TGJF overlays the three enfranchisement perspectives (as exemplified in Figure 1) (Steinfield et al., 2016). In working through the framework, scholars should adopt a dialogical and recursive approach to identify the multi-dimensional and complex nature of gender injustices (Hein et al., 2016) and the power dynamics that hold them in place (Steinfield et al., forthcoming): scholars are to move back-and-forth between remedies

and injustices promoted under each lens to note the ways these may simultaneously complement and conflict, and how they can lead to unintended consequences (refer to Steinfield et al., 2016 for a guideline of questions to consider when working through the TGJF). For example, laws and agency create the foundations upon which socio-cultural change can happen, yet who has agency to enact laws is often determined by whom society recognizes in the first place and how they are recognized in society, which can perpetuate the status quo rather than lead to resolutions. Take as a case in point the failure of parental leave policies to address gender gaps in the workplace, and the higher risks of poverty and consumer vulnerabilities that occur among women as a result (Gentry and Steinfield, 2017). Findings indicate that unless men's identity as breadwinners and women's identity as caretakers are also changed, parental leave policies (which award time to men *or* women) will still predominately be taken by women (Hegewisch and Gornick, 2011). Thus, even though women may have legal recourse and the agency to pursue careers over family demands in some countries, they face stigma in doing so and must push against the dominant gender norms and roles perpetuated in advertisements, media and discourse. Men likewise face the opposite challenge (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson, 2013). Practices amongst those in power that pass male privilege from male to male can increase the social pressure to put work first, and can cause men to face stigma for being a stay at home dad. This is further held in place by having the dominant discourse diminish their parental roles and ability to achieve similar levels of emotional bonding as women. To achieve gender parity in the workplace requires not only laws, and improving an individual's capabilities and voice, but also changing what society believes a man and a woman should be enabled to do, identifying who benefits from the current

arrangements and who works to hold it in place, and recognizing how each (i.e., laws, agency and discourse) influences each other.

Thus, in a similar fashion to the way feminists have long argued that gender should not be studied under the narrow construct of sex (i.e., men versus women), the TCR approach encourages scholars and practitioners to move beyond a narrow concept of justice to allow the intricacies of gender and gender injustices to be more fully fleshed out. As such, it opens the way for injustices that result from intersecting identity attributes, such as race, sexualities, class, age, ethnicity, and religion to be identified, and for the various levels at which injustices can be experienced—macro and micro—to be given proper consideration.

Contemporary Gender Themes within TCR

Within the TCR community, the current landscape is growing in the number of themes related to gender, as seen in the TCR's 2017 Conference program. The initial group that focused on gender and TCR has taken the TGJF as the basic foundational premise and continues to explore other dimensions of injustices, specifically the intersectional nature of injustices (Steinfield et al., 2017). Although more than two decades ago, Bristor and Fischer (1995) noted that empirical research was needed to understand how gender intersected with other identity markers (for example, gender *and* race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, class, body type, and/or physical ability) to result in "simultaneous oppressions," this call has remained largely underdeveloped in the marketing literature. Imperatively, the existing work tends to describe consumers' lived experiences (see Gopaldas and DeRoy (2015) for an overview) and differs from the critical praxis

approach originally envisioned by feminists (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho et al., 2013). Yet as Cho et al. (2013) state, "what makes an analysis intersectional…is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power… [It] emphasizes what intersectionality *does* rather than what intersectionality is" (p. 795, emphasis added) with the potential to link "theory to existent and emergent social and political struggles" (p. 800). In our readings of intersectionality literature, we view these calls as reflecting a transformative motive, and encourage scholars to adopt an equivalent research agenda. In embracing a TCR approach, we propose that to understand the complexities of multiple oppressions scholars need to learn from the people who are oppressed, and who work with individuals affected by oppressions (that is, both consumers *and* practitioners), and to take a more encompassing view that bears light on various sociocultural and institutional forces that hold these in place. It calls for a study of what creates intersectional oppressions, how oppressions are experienced and personified in key institutions, such as politics, media, economic systems, academia/education, family and religion. It requires us to draw upon evidence from practitioners who grapple with challenging and/or changing the simultaneous oppressions perpetuated by these institutions. The goal should not be to just describe but to unearth insights that can help us to understand and work towards resolving these injustices (Steinfield et al., 2017).

Other developing areas of research in TCR focus specifically on one sex—women. Given that discrimination against women is a global phenomenon, scholars are bringing to the fore how this specific gender inequality plays out in a realm of consumer landscapes.

These works build on the history of prior scholarship that, in the transformative consumer research tradition, focused primarily on improving consumer welfare, giving a nod towards gender as it relates to intersectional oppressions (see for example Ozanne and Saatçioğlu, 2008; Ozanne and Fisher, 2012). More recent approaches are placing gender at the core, shifting the analysis to the attribute of 'gender' and how this shapes consumers' experiences in various spaces, such as health care (Mason and Pounders, 2017). Others are noting how gender-based systemic inequalities call us to expand our theoretical positions. Yeh and Hill (2017), for example, push for the marketing discourse to move beyond its focus on violence against women based on objectification in the media, to one that views violence in the way women are treated as commodities in society, traded as sexualized beings or as cheap labor. As they argue, this depersonalization is at the root of women's abuse, making it easier for perpetrators and bystanders to rationalize their behavior, whether that behavior relates to harassment, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, or human trafficking, etc. This depersonalization makes change difficult. In considering the role of marketing, Yeh and Hill (2017) accept that marketing and its entities can feed into the process, yet they also seek to document how it can act to mitigate the problem.

Contemporary Gender Themes within Marketing

As we first noted, gender studies often have an inherent transformative agenda at their core, yet rarely is it labeled as such. Most often the mainstream, marketing-related scholarship stops short of active interventions that, for example, suggest resolutions or alternative practices. Yet we propose that scholarship in disciplines and thematic areas, such as sociology, communication and media, marketing and psychology, marketing and

public policy and macromarketing, could inform and be informed by transformative consumer research related to gender. Likewise, for gender studies, TCR could help it to move beyond its recurring stalemated debates towards a mapping out of potential remedies.

For example, since the 1960s, feminist media scholars and activists have been raising public awareness of problematic gender representations (see for example Friedan, 1963; Kilbourne, 1979), with third-wave analyses incorporating race and sexualities into media critiques through the 1980s and 1990s (Lambiase, Bronstein and Coleman, 2017; Cole and Daniel, 2005). Many have argued that sexist and violent images of women have real consequences by marginalizing and subordinating women (Bronstein, 2011; Gill, 2007). Others note that distortions of women's bodies can contribute to ailments such as lowered self-esteem and eating disorders (Harrison, 2001; Harrison and Cantor, 1997; Lavine, Sweeney and Wagner, 1999; Richins, 1991). Even though aspects such as these play directly into our understandings of consumer vulnerability—a key theme of TCR—we find that the consumer vulnerability scholarship rarely focuses specifically on gender and gender injustices (for notable exceptions see Tuncay and Otnes, 2008; Hutton, 2015). Thus, this area could benefit from research that takes a gender-specific and intersectionality perspectives.

Further, few studies in consumer research acknowledge the range of gender identities (that is, masculinities and femininities), the ways in which they are expressed through marketing practices, and their positive or negative effects on consumers and consumption

choices (for a few exceptions see Coskuner-Balli and Thompson, 2013; Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell, 2005; Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander, 2006; Patterson and Hogg, 2004; Tuncay and Otnes, 2008). Yet a consideration of these is imperative to understanding the way markets and marketing can help shift the socially-constructed beliefs around genders. For example, despite research demonstrating that men may also be negatively affected by problematic representations (Elliott and Elliott, 2005), Zayer and Coleman (2015) found that many advertising professionals persisted in the belief that men were immune to such problems. More recently, however, discourses over men's gendered positions have come to the fore as advertisers increasingly depict men in a range of roles, including domestic and nurturing ones. Even the brand Axe, which has historically engaged in sexist campaigns, has shifted its strategy, based on the brand's own research demonstrating men's lack of confidence in light of pressure to conform to norms of masculinity (Faull, 2016). In 2016, they introduced the *Find Your Magic* campaign to show the spectrum of masculinity, including men in women's clothing and an ad called "Androgynous Kiss" (Neff, 2016). Much of this discourse, however, remains in the popular media. It has yet to be integrated into a constructive analysis that contemplates how marketing and communications not only perpetuate the fragility and rigidities of masculinities and femininities, but how they can help to correct gender injustices. The role marketing could play in reframing and challenging destructive gender ideals and identities, and in creating awareness around gender fragilities and fluidities is imperative if we are going to shift a key component of gender (in)justices, yet it is rarely considered in scholarship.

As this example illustrates, a TCR perspective urges scholars to move beyond stalemated debates. That does not mean an uncritical acceptance of interventions. Rather, we encourage scholars to critique, but to do so with the goal of building up rather than merely tearing down. For example, while advertising and marketing professionals have been criticized as being slow to respond to decades of sustained criticisms regarding negative gender portrayals, various high-profile 21st century campaigns – from Dove's *Campaign for Real Beauty* beginning in 2004 to Under Armour's 2014 launch of their *I Will What I Want* campaign – have been heralded as groundbreaking for women's empowerment. Similarly, the first transgender person to appear on the cover of *National Geographic* signals acceptance of wider expressions of gender (Goldberg, 2017). In addition to enacting and capturing change through representations, media platforms can be used to signal and aid societal shifts. For example, *Teen Vogue*, recognizing the potential activism of its readers, expanded its content to provide news and political coverage (Warrington, 2017). The global #metoo movement (Zacharek, Dockterman and Edwards, 2017) and Hollywood's Time's Up (2017) are initiatives that have leveraged social media to draw attention to the ubiquity of sexual harassment and gender inequality in the workplace and to push for recourse. While some see these as positive shifts towards empowerment, others point out alternative interpretations. For example, women and men have denounced the #metoo movements, saying it has gone too far and mars "undeserving people" (Safronova, 2018). Marketers of women empowerment ads, including 'go-girl' marketing and 'femvertising', are accused of exploiting the 'empowerment' message to promote their brands, or of 'pinkwashing' (Davidson, 2015; Keane, 2013; Mahdawi, 2014). Critics accuse Dove of exploiting feminist messages to

sell beauty products, pointing to the conflicting cross-brand messages of its parent company, Unilever. This becomes apparent when comparing Dove's campaign with Axe's historically sexist advertising (Kurtzleben, 2013). Contestations such as these are important to consider because they allow us to view potential unintended consequences and contradictions. However, we reason that it is also important to acknowledge the positive accomplishments of the movements and the media, whether large-scale or incremental.

Future Directions in TCR and Marketing

While gender is diffusing rapidly within TCR and the marketing literature (as exemplified in the collection of chapters in this book), we note that there is still progress to be made. In offering directives, we adopt and encourage others to follow the guidance proposed by Ozanne and Fisher (2012) regarding four sensitizing principals: scholars should take into account intersectionalities, be reflexive (that is, identifying whose interests are and are not being served by the questions asked and answers given), engage with the stakeholders of the research, and seek to empower and increase social justice for marginalized groups. Bearing this in mind, we suggest five ways TCR research could expand its consideration of gender, including: adding a 'gender lens', expanding sample bases, broadening how and what we study about gender, extending the conceptualization of gender, and addressing the elephant in the room.

Adding a 'Gender Lens'

Many TCR themes continue to overlook the primacy of 'gender' as an attribute that,

globally, contributes to marginalization and oppression. We thus urge that a 'gender lens' be added to many of TCR's thematic areas, such as ethnicity and harmful cultural associations (Pullig, Kipnis, and Demangeot, 2017; Visconti et al., 2014), stigma (Mirabito et al., 2016), impoverished families (Pettigrew et al., 2014), financial illiteracy and vulnerability (Mende and Scott, 2017; O'Connor, Newmeyer, and Wong, 2017), subsistence consumers and sustainable development (Gau and Venugopal, 2017), food security (Peracchio and Bublitz, 2017), modern slavery (Shaw, Chatzidakis, and Carrington, 2017), and refugee interventions (Shultz and Barrios, 2017). This would enhance our understanding of what contributes to the injustices, improve suggested policies and solutions, and answer Ozanne and Fischer's (2012) call to ensure that "research does not reinforce subordination among some of the people that it seeks to help" (p. 90). We note that this is particularly needed given that many policies lack a specific gender focus. For example, many policies might incidentally have a gendered element (such as child support for single parents, who are predominately mothers) but often the emphasis is on the specific policy issue (in this case, poverty). As such, policy makers and practitioners neglect how these issues are often gendered (as per the feminization of poverty (Gentry and Steinfield, 2017) or how gender injustices contribute to these issues in the first place (for instance, women's lack of control over their bodies increases their number of children, which in turn limits their ability to invest in education and increases the risks of perpetuating poverty for the family unit) (Steinfield et al., forthcoming).

As this example demonstrates, the need to consider gender relations is particularly

relevant to policies and studies that stop at the 'household' or 'community' level as their unit of analysis, such as the topics of subsistence consumers, food security, or impoverished families. Unless the power dynamics within households and communities are identified and the importance of gender roles recognized, the privileged gender hierarchy that contributes to holding poverty and insecurities in place will likely remain unaddressed and limit the effectiveness of interventions and policies. Moreover, identifying who these policies omit and make invisible or to whom they deny identity and agency, such as genderqueers, is important if we are to identify the spectrum of (dis)empowerment. We predict, as this case illustrates, that in adopting a reflexive account (as per Ozanne and Fischer's (2012) recommendation) there is a high likelihood that researchers will encounter gender. Rather than gender being an afterthought, we propose that it be shifted to the forefront, guiding research designs. (Refer to Hein et al. (2016) for suggested guidelines regarding the incorporation of gender into studies). For other topics, such as stigma and modern slavery, where gender is mentioned parenthetically, we encourage scholars to develop targeted studies that delve into the centrality of gender (such as narrow gender identities and roles or gender-based inequities), and to assess or test how marketing or the marketplace contributes to resolving or perpetuating gender-based injustices.

Expanding Sample Bases

In addition to TCR themes, we observe that TCR researchers could benefit from taking up Ozanne and Fischer's (2012) charge to study marginalized groups, particularly those where gender (men, women, and queergenders) intersects with other identity markers,

such as sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, race and ethnicity, class, nationality, to name a few. Moreover, scholars should take a more encompassing view of who they believe can enact change. Often scholars talk about the role of policies and practitioners in transforming injustices. However, as the current instabilities in the political landscape and crisis of liberal democracy make apparent, it is often social movements and a groundswell of individuals that have historically brought about the most transformational changes. Resistance movements such as the Women's March, social media movements such as the #metoo, and micro-level actions are taking place to counterbalance the current political climate—a climate, which for many, represents a regression in progress and policies related to gender equality (Women's March on Washington, 2017; refer also to the collection of works in Köttig, Bitzan, and Petö, 2016). If we are to understand how gender inequities can be transformed, we need to consider how individuals can and are taking political action in their daily lives—on a big and small level.

Broadening How and What We Study about Gender

How we *study* gender is another aspect that future TCR-gender studies could build upon. For instance, while scholars have identified the gendered nature of vulnerability and poverty (Hill and Dhanda, 1999; 2004; Patterson, Hill, and Maloy, 1995), rarer are works that explicitly address the gender aspect *and* the way this could be transformed (for notable exceptions refer to Hill and Stephens, 1997; Ozanne and Saatçioğlu, 2008). If we are going to transform gender injustices, proposed solutions need to involve the stakeholders and should be tested. Participatory action research (Ozanne and Saatçioğlu,

2008; Whyte, 1991), or evidence-based intervention studies, such as randomized control trials undertaken in public health, psychology, social work, criminology and education studies (Montgomery et al., 2013) are areas of scholarship that TCR gender studies should learn from and utilize.

Secondly, given that gender is lived materially through our bodies and through representations that (mis)recognize each other's bodies, TCR and marketing scholarship could benefit from studying aspects of gender related to the role of bodies. Bodies, as noted in feminist and queer studies, are sites of consumption, contestations, and consumer identity politics (see for example: Bordo, 1993; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Holliday and Hassard, 2001; McNay, 2008; Sanger, 2010; Skeggs, 1997), yet their application within TCR remains largely muted. The prevailing assumption assumes homogeneity in bodies. There is a need to change this perspective. We perceive that recognizing the body could illuminate gender and gender injustices in multiple ways. We summarize these into three pertinent areas that could serve as starting points. These include: i) the 'coding' of bodies; ii) the interaction of space and bodies; and iii) the sexual and sexualized body.

The coding of bodies. As the concept of intersectionality gains traction in consumer behavior and marketing disciplines (Zayer et al., 2017), scholars could add insights into how bodily dispositions and consumption choices embody these oppressions, and how these coded bodies (e.g., black, woman) are reflected back upon the consumer's mind. Bodies, as prior scholars demonstrate, are conditioned and regulated by normalized

gendered practices: bodies are modified through marketplace pressures and consumer choices (Figueiredo et al., 2014; Li, Min and Belk, 2008; Ourahmoune, 2017); and are controlled through social marketing (Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013; Steinfield et al., forthcoming). Despite these inroads, there are limited consumer studies that consider how routine, gendered consumption activities, and practices that result from intersectional identities and oppressions, increase the potential for longer-term health ramifications, especially for products individuals ignorantly consume (such as toxic chemicals in food or cleaning products or consumer goods such as make-up).

The interaction of space and bodies: Spaces are key areas where social injustices against bodies occur. Spaces can act to: (in)visibly reinforce discriminatory practices, for example, non-gender neutral toilets (Browne, 2004); make people feel displaced and marginalized, such as spaces that make it difficult for obese individuals or pregnant woman to travel through or feel accepted (Holliday and Hassard, 2001); or they can heighten bodily security concerns, such as women in nightclubs or refugee camps (Hynes, 2004; Bunch, 1990), and queergender people in the military (Levy, Parco and Spears 2015). Space calls for scholars to appreciate the heterogeneity of bodies and bodily experiences, moving us towards a more inclusive and reflexive account.

The sexual and sexualized consumer body: While gender studies have emphasized the importance of sexuality (see for example the journal *Sexualities* and the special issue in *Women's Journal Quarterly* (eds. Eversley and Morgan (2007)), the sexual consumer body remains a suppressed topic in most of consumer behavior literature. Notable forays

are being made, but given the centrality of this issue to injustices—such as the sex-trade industry and the global power dissymmetries that perpetuate it (Hein et al., 2016)—and justices—such as the freedom of expression consumers experience in their sexual lives (Walther and Schouten, 2016)—there is a clear need for additional research to delve into the realm of sexuality. Particularly, we note a need to extend beyond cisnormative women and men to assess representations of other sexed bodies (e.g., queergenders), the sexualized body in other cultures, and the norms, meaning systems and power dissymmetries governing these bodies and the consumption of these bodies (Laing, Pitcher and Smith, 2015).

Extending the Conceptualization of Gender and Sex

Likewise, we need to expand upon how we *conceive* of gender *and* sex in our studies. In building upon the latter element of recognizing the centrality of the body, such an effort calls for the inclusion of genderqueers and their understandings of 'gender', and a recognition of sexual dimorphism. Individual's biological attributes may not correspond to the culturally created binaries of male/female; yet studies that explore the varied intersex conditions and the way these affect consumers' lived experiences and result in societal 'gender panics' (attempts to reclaim the naturalness of the gender binary (Westbrook and Schilt, 2014)) remain significantly overlooked by marketing scholars. This area of research is well aligned with a TCR perspective as scholarship from other fields demonstrates how people's rights are called into question, including the right to choose amongst mundane products such as toilets (Schilt and Westbrook, 2015), to access complicated products such as medical procedures (Bloom, 2003) or to participate

and be represented in celebrated fields such as athletics (Westbrook and Schilt, 2014).

Secondly, in expanding upon how we perceive of gender, we encourage a perspective that recognizes how gender is not only situated in our physicality but how it is also something that one *does*, that is, gender as performative (Butler, 1988; Dozier, 1995; West and Zimmerman, 1987). Taking this perspective forward, we encourage researchers to shift away from a sex-determined binary view of women versus men and to move towards analyses that reflect a continuum of contextualized performances of femininity, masculinity, and many other possible gender expressions. We noted above how ad campaigns are reflecting this continuum of gender expressions. But we also need to look beyond an etic or outsider's perspective in which researchers interpret gender representations or roles, to emphasize the emic or insider's perspective. This requires capturing consumers' voices, to hear how and why gender is performed by individuals in various situations, *and* to identify the consequences therein. Adding a TCR perspective urges scholars to consider consumers whose gender performances and/or sexed body may put them at increased risk of an injustice (such as stigma or violence). Deviations or perceptions of 'transgressions' from role expectations, how consumers create and gain social acceptance of new gendered performance, or how individuals respond to shifts in popular media (as alluded to above), can provide insights for researchers, revealing how transformation is personalized and experienced, advanced or limited. This would allow us to align research and practice with the lived experiences of consumers. Such research may also serve to transform consumer gender perceptions and expectations, leading to a disruption of the narrowing tactics of market segmentation and perhaps an eventual

replacement of categorizations of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' with 'behaviors' in general.

Addressing the Elephant in the Room

Finally, in adding 'gender', we need to be aware of the gender relations that occur within academia. Indeed, as Prothero and McDonagh's chapter in this book and others (Flynn, Haynes and Kilgour, 2015) note, gender research is marginalized and scholars can experience gender-based injustices. Resolving these injustices calls for us to build bridges between scholarly groups and engage with each other constructively. It requires that we work towards transforming academia together. It demands that we apply a TCR perspective to ourselves, our discipline, and related fields.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described the natural crossover between gender studies and TCR to encourage the development of a transformative gender studies scholarship. We explored how scholars could assess gender injustices by detailing the TGJF. Although the integration of all three 'justice' lenses of the TGJF—social justice, capabilities approach, and recognition theory—creates a higher threshold of difficulty in the research process, we suggest that the nuances provided will minimize the potential unintended consequences that result from a more singular 'justice' perspectives. We explained how TCR scholarship is exploring gender, and, in moving forward, how it could benefit from identifying how gender contributes to injustices—both outside of and within academia. Likewise, we noted how gender scholars could benefit from moving beyond stalemated

debates to take a constructive, transformative stance. In essence, we argue that there is a need to go beyond simply describing or critique existing norms and structures to moving into the political realm. We encourage and echo calls to "restore feminism as a political movement" (Alptraum, 2017) for the betterment of humankind.

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